

## Black farmers to hold rally against gov't discrimination

BY SAM MANUEL

Black farmers will hold a rally and one-day conference in Washington, D.C., April 28. The rally will demand that President Barack Obama's administration follow through on legislation that the president sponsored as a senator in 2007 enabling more Black farmers to apply for and receive compensation for discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In 1999 Black farmers won a settlement in the historic *Pigford v. Glickman* class-action lawsuit that challenged the USDA's discriminatory treatment of Black farmers in gaining access to funding and other services compared to similarly situated white farmers. Farmers who prevailed were to receive a \$50,000 tax-exempt payment, debt forgiveness, and preferential treatment on future loan applications. However, 86 percent of the 94,000 farmers who filed claims were turned down, overwhelmingly due to stringent deadlines imposed by the government without adequate notice.

"We are going into planting season and farmers need the money due to them," John Boyd told the *Militant* in a phone interview. Boyd is president of the

**Continued on page 3**

## Washington may expand military use in Somalia

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In the wake of the killing of three Somali pirates by U.S. Special Forces, Washington is stepping up its military presence off Somalia's coast. Officials in the Obama administration have also indicated that they are discussing plans to go ashore in pursuit of the pirates.

This move comes as the latest effort by the U.S. rulers to establish political stability in this East African country, wracked by immense economic underdevelopment stemming from imperialist domination. The toilers there have been subjected to nearly two decades of civil war between competing Islamist and other procapitalist factions.

"We are resolved to halt the rise of piracy in that region," stated President Barack Obama April 13, making clear that further U.S. military action is being considered.

Vice Adm. William Gortney, commander of U.S. naval forces in the Middle East, told the media a day earlier that U.S. ships could only do so much and that "the ultimate solution for piracy is on the land." Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that this should involve "going after" pirate

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## Int'l 'Day of Action' called to halt the execution of Troy Davis

BY EDDIE BECK  
AND JACOB PERASSO

ATLANTA—Troy Davis supporters have called a "Global Day of Action" on May 19 to oppose his execution and win a new trial. An appeals court April 16 denied Davis's second federal appeal of his 1991 conviction for the murder of an off-duty police officer in Savannah, Georgia. Davis is Black; the cop was white.

The court also ordered a 30-day stay of execution to allow Davis to appeal to the Supreme Court.

In a 2-1 decision the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that innocence alone is not grounds for a new trial. Citing the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, the court ruled that Davis must also show that a constitutional violation in the original trial led jurors to the wrong conclusion and that he couldn't have made this argument during his previous habeas corpus appeal. That act, signed by President William Clinton, placed deadlines and limited the number of appeals death-row prisoners can make.

The Circuit Court majority said it was denying the request for a new hearing because Davis had not raised some of the issues and evidence earlier and that the 1996 act was designed

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## Meetings spur donations to 'Militant' fund

BY ANGEL LARISCY

"We had a very successful fund-drive forum and fund-raising dinner April 18 at a well-known community center in central Montreal," writes John Steele. Twenty-eight people attended the program to help raise money for the \$105,000 *Militant* fund drive, which ends May 19.

Michel Prairie, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal, was the featured speaker on the topic "Cuba and the World Today."

Steele reports the meeting raised

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## All out for May Day! Legalization now!



Militant/John Hawkins

Laundry worker and trade unionist Maria Hernandez speaks at April 21 press conference in Chicago, urging people to join May Day actions in defense of immigrant rights.

## No deportations! End the ICE raids!

*The statement below was released April 22 by Dan Fein, Maura DeLuca, and Tom Baumann, Socialist Workers Party candidates for mayor, public advocate, and Manhattan borough*

## SWP CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

*president in New York, respectively; and Eleanor García, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 32nd District in California.*

Socialist Workers Party candidates will join thousands of workers at May

**Continued on page 11**

## Chicago conference calls May 1 action

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—Nearly 40 workers representing six of the largest unions in this city gathered in front of the Chicago Board of Trade April 21 to announce plans to come out in force on May Day.

The union representatives were joined by Lawrence Benito, deputy director of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. He announced a protest action at the Broadview Detention Center in suburban Des Plaines April 30.

Speaking at the press conference, Ewa Miklewicz, a janitor and member of Service Employees International

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## Opposition to U.S. embargo of Cuba marks 'Americas' summit

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The Summit of the Americas held April 17–19 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, registered the fact that Washington's decades-long campaign to isolate Cuba because of its socialist revolution has been a failure. Opposition to Washington's 47-year embargo against Cuba was at the center of discussions throughout the three-day gathering.

Thirty-four nations in the Americas were represented at the summit. Cuba was excluded, as was the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico.

As of June 1 of this year every country in the Americas except the United States will have established normal diplomatic relations with Havana. Washington broke diplomatic relations in January 1961 and pressured the Organization of American States

(OAS) to expel Cuba in January 1962. One week later, U.S. president John Kennedy imposed a total trade embargo on Cuba and severely restricted

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# Planned gov’t layoffs in Puerto Rico protested

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hundreds in Puerto Rico have joined protests against massive layoffs of public workers and a wage freeze approved by Puerto Rico governor Luis Fortuño. Some 30,000 or more layoffs could begin in July.

Fortuño signed the “Fiscal State of Emergency Law” March 9. “We all must confront the reality of a bankrupt government,” he claimed in a televised speech. “It’s up to all of us to put our house in order.” He said that \$5 billion destined for Puerto Rico as part of Washington’s so-called stimulus plan is not enough.

Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony. Official unemployment there is 14.7 percent. About 218,000 people—21 percent of the island’s workforce—work for the government, the largest employer.

Under “Phase I” of the law, government workers are encouraged to “voluntarily” quit their jobs in exchange for one to three months’ severance pay, one year of medical insurance, and possibly access to some portion of their pensions. Workers with 20 years’ seniority are asked to take a 10 percent pay cut in the form of two unpaid days off each month.

The wages and benefits of all public workers will be frozen starting in July and union contracts essentially torn up.

If not enough workers quit or take the cuts before July 1, Fortuño threatened that “Phase II”—laying off 30,000 workers or more—will begin. Teachers, firefighters, and cops, the law states, will not be laid off.

But Darnes Fernández, service di-

rector of the Federation of Teachers of Puerto Rico, said in a phone interview that several thousand teachers could also face layoffs. These include new teachers still on probation and teachers who are “transitory,” that is, without a permanent classroom.

The law institutes an \$11.15 tax on every 100 cigarettes and additional taxes on alcoholic beverages. These hikes are permanent. Fortuño announced that he was taking a 10 percent salary cut and temporarily increasing some taxes on businesses.

“This law was passed without any public hearings,” Roberto Pagán, president of the Puerto Rican Workers Union (SPT), affiliated to the U.S.-based Service Employees International Union, told the *Militant*. “It is the biggest attack on working people here in decades.”

Fortuño is also pushing a bill that calls for forming “public-private” alliances for highways and ports and other government services. “They want to privatize the services that working people need,” Pagán said.

Some 27 percent of the budget goes toward paying interest on debt to banks and other capitalist moneylenders. That



Alvin Couto

April 15 demonstration in San Juan, Puerto Rico, protesting layoffs of government workers.

will not be touched under the new law.

Many companies have already laid off workers across the island. The pharmaceutical industry has cut more than 3,000 jobs since mid-2006.

“We are not going to allow workers to be sacrificed while rich and large interests remain untouched,” said José Rodríguez, a leader of the Puerto Rican Workers’ Federation (FTPR), March 1, before the law was passed.

Dozens of school employees led by the Federation of Teachers of Puerto Rico

demonstrated outside the Department of Education April 3 to protest the law. Hundreds of government workers organized by the SPT marched through the streets of Old San Juan April 8, carrying crosses to protest the coming layoffs.

Hundreds of workers from a half dozen unions protested April 15 in front of the Treasury Department in San Juan.

More protests are planned leading up to actions on May 1 by a variety of unions and union federations.

## Thousands held in modern day ‘debtor prisons’

BY SETH GALINSKY

In 1970 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to keep people in prison beyond their sentence because they are unable to pay a fine or court costs. Today thousands of working people across the United

States are still imprisoned for not paying fines and other court debts.

Edwina Nowlin, an unemployed Michigan resident, was released after 28 days in jail, only after the American Civil Liberties Union protested. In Nowlin’s case, the judge sent her to jail because she couldn’t pay the \$104 a month she was charged for her son’s “lodging” at Bay Pines Juvenile Detention Center in Escanaba.

Until a few years ago cops in Gulfport, Mississippi, routinely conducted sweeps of the city’s Black neighborhoods, arrested people with unpaid fines, and jailed them. The practice continued at least until 2007 when city officials reached an agreement with the Southern Center for Human Rights and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund to implement an “Amnesty Week” and “community service”

in place of fines in some cases.

The Florida court system is a leader in the modern-day debtors’ prisons. According to a study released by the Brennan Center for Justice, 839 people were arrested last year in Leon County, Florida, for failure to appear after not paying court fees and fines or “falling behind in a payment plan.”

Florida officials told the *New York Times* that to get around constitutional prohibitions on jailing people “solely” over fees and fines they cannot pay, technically they jail them for violating court orders.

Valerie Gainous, who narrowly escaped going to prison in Florida, even after paying restitution for writing bad checks, said she would try to keep up with the payments for additional fines “to keep from going to jail for being poor.”

## THE MILITANT

### Halt U.S. threats against North Korea!

*The ‘Militant’ stands in solidarity with the Korean people’s decades-long struggle to reunify their country and covers the fight to withdraw all U.S. troops, nuclear weapons, and other armaments from the region. Don’t miss a single issue!*



Protesters in Seoul oppose annual U.S.-South Korea joint military exercise in 2006.

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# Afghan women protest law that subjugates them to men

BY SETH GALINSKY

Two hundred people, mostly young women and some men, marched through Afghanistan’s capital April 15 in support of women’s rights. The protest in Kabul was in opposition to a new law that says women must agree to have sex with their husbands at least once every four days.

“I am concerned about my future with this law,” said 14-year-old Masuma Hasani, who joined the protest with her parents and younger sister. “We want our rights. We don’t want women to just be used.”

The law, signed by Afghan president Hamid Karzai, applies only to Shia Muslims, who make up between 10 and 20 percent of Afghanistan’s population.

It says that women cannot leave their home without the permission of a male relative or her husband except for a “legitimate purpose,” such as an emergency, and that they must wear makeup and dress up if their husband demands it.

Many of the pro-women rights protesters are students at Kabul University and most are Hazaras, an ethnic group who are the majority of Afghan Shiites.

They handed out a flyer saying the new law “insults the dignity of women” and chanted, “We don’t want a Taliban law, we want a democratic law and we want a law that guarantees human dignity.”

The march began outside a mosque in Kabul, which houses a madrasa. Hundreds of male students poured out of the religious school and confronted the women. “Get out of here, you whores,” some of the men shouted.

“We want our rights!” one of the women shouted back. “We want equality!”

Three hundred women religion students from Khatam-ul-Nabieen Shia University, who support the law, staged a counterprotest.

Ayatollah Mohammed Asef Mohseni, a prominent backer of the law, denied that it permits a husband to rape his wife. But “if a woman says no, the man has the right not to feed her,” he told the press.

Mohseni criticized one amendment to the law that introduced a minimum legal age for marriage, 16 for women and 18 for men. Some 57 percent of Afghan brides are under 16 years old, 87 percent of women there are illiterate, and 1 in 9 dies in childbirth.

After information on the new law



Shah Marai/AFP/Getty Images

Afghan women march through streets of Kabul to protest law that restricts rights of married women. Banner says, “We don’t want Taliban Law.”

became public, the Afghan government came under intense criticism from Washington and other imperialist governments that claim to support women’s rights.

Karzai first said that the media had “mistranslated” the law. But the day

after the women’s demonstration in Kabul he told CNN, “Now I have instructed, in consultation with clergy of the country, that the law be revised and any article that is not in keeping with the Afghan constitution and Islamic Sharia must be removed.”

## Target week to boost ‘Militant’ circulation drive

BY PAUL MAILHOT

April 22—Supporters of the *Militant* this weekend will begin the final two weeks of the subscription campaign. Every area should make the most of the nine days between April 25 and the May Day weekend as a target week to get back on schedule to reach and surpass their local quotas. The seven-week international drive to get 2,150 subscriptions this spring will conclude on May 12.

The *Militant* subscription campaign now stands at 902 renewals and new readers. To be on schedule the campaign should be at 57 percent, or 1,226 subscriptions in hand. So there is some ground to make up.

In New York, supporters of the paper project selling 120 subscriptions between April 25 and May 3. Plans for the week will include sales at a number of political events, door-to-door visits in working-class communities, and street campaigning with the Socialist Workers Party candidates. Socialist campaigners in New York plan to participate in a number of rallies on May Day in support of legalization for all immigrants where they will introduce the *Militant* to workers and students.

In one working-class community in Boston’s Mattapan neighborhood a number of Haitian workers picked

up subscriptions to the *Militant* last weekend and learned about the May Day march from socialist campaigners. One Haitian worker also bought *Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* as well as several other books, wrote Kevin Dwire. “He left to get a bag to put them all in. When he got back he bought two more books and joined the Pathfinder Readers Club!”

Many areas are also taking advantage of other protests by workers and students against the effects of the capitalist crisis. “We just posted five new subscriptions sold at a protest against budget cuts at Seattle Central Community College,” wrote Edwin Fruit. One student also bought *New International* no. 12 featuring the article “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun.” He said, “I want to know what working people can do about this.”

Supporters of the *Militant* in Des Moines, Iowa, will be participating in Asian American Heritage week activities at Iowa State University, and other campus activities. They will also be organizing several regional teams to reach out to meatpacking workers.

## Black farmers rally April 28

Continued from front page

National Black Farmers Association.

Legislation sponsored by Obama that was incorporated into the 2008 farm bill allows thousands of farmers who were excluded from the *Pigford* settlement to seek redress. It also provides an initial \$100 million to finance payments to farmers who can prove they were discriminated against by the government.

Now officials at the USDA say the initial \$100 million outlay should be a ceiling to be divided among farmers who qualify for compensation, reported the Associated Press.

In a separate phone interview, Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers

and Agriculturalists Association in Tillery, North Carolina, said farmers would end up with only a few thousand dollars. “That’s not enough to pay the lawyers’ fees,” Grant said. Thousands of Black farmers have lost their land as a result of USDA discriminatory practices. Grant faces the loss of his family’s land in the next 30 days because of an outstanding contested debt of \$54,000. The government claims that with interest the debt has risen to \$200,000.

“Once again we are being

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## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

All Imperialist Troops Out of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan. Speaker: Lea Sherman, SWP candidate for city attorney. Sat., May 2. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St., Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

Radical Assault by Rulers and Need for Proletarian Revolution in the U.S.: Benefit for Militant Fund. Speakers: Harry D’Agostino, high school activist; Paul Pederson, SWP National Committee. Fri., April 24. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program 8 p.m. 307 W. 36 St., 10th floor (use north elevators). Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

The Accelerating Crisis of Capitalism: Why Working Class Needs to Take Political Power. Benefit for Militant Fund. Speaker: Ben Joyce, Socialist Workers Party. Sun. April 26. Reception, 4 p.m.; program, 5 p.m. Legalization of All Immigrant Workers Now! Speakers: Janet Post, SWP candidate for city controller; others. Sat., May 2, 7:30 p.m. Both programs at 188 Wyoming Ave., Tel.: (215) 455-2682.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

Revolutionary Cuba and Its Role in the World Today. Militant Fund Event and Grand Opening. Speaker: Omari Musa. Sun., April 26. Dinner, 3 p.m.; program, 4 p.m. 143 Kennedy St., NW Suite 15. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

Working People in Thailand Oppose Military Coup, Electoral Threat. Speaker: Patrick Brown, Communist League. Fri., May 1, 7 p.m. Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu, above Laundromat. Tel.: (09) 276-8885.

## ‘Militant’ Subscription Drive

March 21 – May 12, 2009  
Week 4

Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Newark, NJ	75	46	61%
San Francisco	150	85	57%
Boston	60	33	55%
Atlanta	160	75	47%
Houston	95	39	41%
Los Angeles	125	50	40%
Philadelphia	75	29	39%
Chicago	120	45	38%
Seattle	101	38	38%
Des Moines, IA	130	45	35%
Miami	150	51	34%
New York	280	94	34%
Twin Cities, MN	140	48	34%
Washington, D.C.	70	24	34%
Other		4	
TOTAL	1731	706	41%
CANADA			
	115	43	37%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	80	58	73%
Edinburgh	35	20	57%
TOTAL	115	78	68%
NEW ZEALAND			
	70	26	37%
AUSTRALIA*			
	60	37	62%
SWEDEN			
	20	12	60%
Total	2111	902	42%
Should be	2150	1226	57%
*raised quota			



# Pentagon seeks shifts in spending for ‘long war’

BY DOUG NELSON

The Pentagon is pressing for adjustments in the war budget to better equip U.S. military forces for their long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the range of conflicts they anticipate fighting in the coming period. It builds on the strategic course in weapons procurement led by former defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld while making adjustments based on what the military is learning as it fights.

Current defense secretary Robert Gates presented major aspects of the proposed budget in speeches to the Army and Navy war colleges April 16–17.

“We have to be prepared for the wars we are most likely to fight, not just the wars we’ve traditionally been best suited to fight or threats we conjure up from potential adversaries who also have limited resources,” he said.

The proposal represents a modest, 4 percent increase in the base military budget to \$534 billion. U.S. military spending has increased 72 percent since 2000.

The 2010 budget would place more emphasis on increasing the size of the military with higher pay and benefits. It would also increase funding for military intelligence, Special Forces, and cyber warfare specialists.

In a departure from his predecessor, Gates said the Pentagon also plans to

hire 30,000 new civilian personnel over the next five years and reduce use of contractors.

The proposal includes a number of cuts to some longer-term future weapons programs, whose costs are high and practicality questionable, in favor of weapons that “can be produced on time, on budget, and in significant numbers,” Gates said. “As Stalin once said, ‘Quantity has a quality all of its own.’”

In addition, the administration is looking to reduce the proportion of its spending on weapons designed more specifically for conventional combat between regular armies such as China or Russia. U.S. dominance in this area is so well established, Gates argued, that some of this money is better spent—at this time—to “win the wars we are in, and improve capabilities in areas where we are underinvested and potentially vulnerable.”

Along these lines the proposal calls for ending production of the F-22 “Raptor,” the most advanced fighter jet, after 187 of them are produced. The Pentagon would instead increase spending on the less expensive and more versatile F-35 fighter/bomber, to \$11.2 billion from \$6.8 billion, with plans to greatly expand production over the next five years.

The new budget would also cancel the \$13 billion program to build 26 state-of-the-art presidential helicopters, while



Department of Defense/Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson

**U.S. Special Forces troops in Mosul, Iraq, in 2005. New U.S. war budget increases funding for U.S. Special Forces, while reducing spending on weapons for conventional combat.**

increasing overall funding for helicopters and helicopter pilots, which are in high demand in Afghanistan.

Funding for the next-generation bomber, which was scheduled to produce its first prototype in 2018, is also slated to be cut. At the same time, the proposal calls for stepping up the number of aerial drones in 2010, which are being used for reconnaissance and ground strikes in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq.

The Pentagon seeks to slow down the production of aircraft carriers and some other blue-water warships where it has unchallenged superiority. The proposal projects stepping up production of smaller, faster, and more agile and versatile combat vessels better suited for operations closer to shore, such as along Somalia.

The new budget includes shifts in spending on antiballistic missile (ABM) programs, designed to enhance the threat of Washington’s nuclear arsenal.

The plan would divert spending on the development of more complex future systems capable of taking out ballistic missiles in the first few minutes after launch, in favor of building up its more mature and tested systems designed to destroy missiles in the latter phases of trajectory. The proposal includes the addition of six—double the three announced in January—ABM-equipped Aegis warships to its current fleet of 18.

The *Wall Street Journal* ran an editorial April 10 disagreeing with reduced spending on dominance in conventional weaponry, including naval forces and the F-22 Raptor, as well as investment in future ABM technology. It cited Moscow and Beijing’s upgrading of conventional weaponry, and in particular Beijing’s plans to begin developing a relatively small blue-water naval force, as reasons for maintaining the same degree of focus on Washington’s conventional arsenal.

## ‘Militant’ fund campaign

**Continued from front page**  
\$1,116 and an additional \$750 in new pledges. Because of the enthusiastic response they are receiving, supporters of the socialist newsweekly in Canada have decided to raise their fund-drive quota from \$5,000 to \$7,500.

Partisans of the paper in Canada will be holding a fund-raising brunch

in Toronto the April 25–26 weekend. Fund meetings will also be taking place in New York and Newark, New Jersey.

Thirty people attended a fund-raising celebration in Seattle on April 18, reports Seattle fund-drive organizer John Naubert. Eleanor García, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 32nd District in Los Angeles, spoke on “The Accelerating Crisis of Industrial Production and Trade: Why the Working Class Needs to Take Political Power.” García pointed to the *Militant* as an essential tool for workers in struggle around the world.

Also speaking at the program was Carlos Vara, a janitor and member of the Service Employees International Union. “I like the *Militant* and I show it to some people where I work,” said Vara. At the meeting \$2,700 was pledged or contributed, bringing the total pledges from Seattle to \$7,254, over their \$7,000 quota.

The \$105,000 fund is necessary to help cover the basic operating costs of the paper as well as special reporting trips. The *Militant* is a workers paper that relies on contributions from readers who appreciate its coverage of the struggles and resistance of workers and toilers and its analysis of the news from the standpoint of the interests of the working class.

With the increased quota from supporters in Canada, only \$1,650 more in pledges is needed to make the \$105,000 goal. Overall the fund drive is two percent behind schedule.

To make a contribution or contact a distributor of the paper, see page 6 or send your contribution to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

## White House vents documents on torture of ‘terror’ prisoners

BY BEN JOYCE

President Barack Obama has declassified and released several documents, with parts blacked out, about the torture of prisoners by CIA agents at U.S. prisons in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and elsewhere.

The documents reveal the use of torture by the CIA since at least 2002, including “waterboarding” and other brutal techniques. Officials in the Obama administration said that no CIA agents involved in the torture would be tried.

The Justice Department originally issued the documents to give legal cover for specific incidents where individuals were tortured in the course of Washington’s “war on terror.” Those tortured were accused of being involved in terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda.

The documents outline authorized tactics in some detail. They include sleep deprivation, placing a detainee in a dark, confined area with insects, and forced nudity, in addition to striking the detainee in the face or abdomen and slamming him or her into a wall.

Waterboarding, a torture method that simulates drowning by pouring water over a cloth that covers the nose and mouth while one is shackled to an inclined board, was also approved. The memos indicate that waterboarding was employed at least 266 times against two detainees alleged to be leaders of al-Qaeda.

The Obama administration said it would not authorize these methods today, but defended the actions of the CIA at the time.

“It is our intention to assure those

who carried out their duties relying in good faith upon legal advice from the Department of Justice that they will not be subject to prosecution,” said Obama in an April 16 statement.

Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair released a statement the same day offering rationalizations for the torture program. “Those methods, read on a bright, sunny safe day in April 2009, appear graphic and disturbing. . . . But we will absolutely defend those who relied on these memos and those guidelines,” he said.

“Let us be thankful that we have public servants who seek to do the difficult work of protecting our country under the explicit assurance that their actions are both necessary and legal,” he added.

News of further attacks on democratic rights came April 16 as reports of illegal wiretapping by the National Security Agency surfaced. Intelligence officials announced an “overcollection” of wiretaps on domestic communications took place in recent months, the *New York Times* reported.

The *Times* said surveillance of domestic phone calls and e-mail messages was carried out “beyond the broad legal limits.” A statement from the office of the director of national intelligence wrote off the illegal spying as “inadvertent mistakes.”

Last July Washington passed a law with bipartisan support that expanded the legal authority of the White House to spy without a warrant on communications between U.S. citizens and foreign nationals “reasonably believed” to be outside the country.

### ‘Militant’ Fund Drive Spring 2009 ♦ Week 3 of 8

Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
<b>Twin Cities, MN</b>	<b>\$6,600</b>	<b>\$4,615</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Atlanta</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$4,107</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Des Moines, IA</b>	<b>\$1,900</b>	<b>\$905</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>\$8,800</b>	<b>\$3,620</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>\$13,000</b>	<b>\$5,631</b>	<b>43%</b>
Chicago	\$9,000	\$3,300	37%
Philadelphia	\$3,300	\$1,050	32%
New York	\$15,500	\$4,420	29%
Miami	\$3,300	\$789	24%
Boston	\$2,800	\$630	23%
Washington, D.C.	\$4,500	\$762	17%
Newark, NJ	\$3,200	\$337	11%
Seattle	\$7,000	\$763	11%
Houston	\$3,000	\$160	5%
TOTAL	\$89,900	\$31,089	35%
<b>CANADA*</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<b>\$4,639</b>	<b>62%</b>
NEW ZEALAND	\$2,500	\$890	36%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	\$1,500	\$527	35%
Edinburgh	\$500	\$0	0%
TOTAL	\$2,000	\$527	26%
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>\$1,050</b>	<b>\$710</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>\$400</b>	<b>\$150</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$103,350</b>	<b>\$38,005</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>\$105,000</b>	<b>\$39,375</b>	<b>38%</b>
*raised quota			



## ON THE PICKET LINE

### 600 Steelworkers in Ontario strike against wage cuts

HAMILTON, Ontario—More than 600 members of the United Steelworkers (USW) Local 7135 went on strike here against National Steel Car April 6. The previous day, the union members had voted by almost 96 percent to authorize strike action when their contract expired at midnight.

USW Local 7135 president Gary Pedron, a welder at National Steel Car for 13 years, told the *Militant* that the key issues in the strike are company demands for “slashing wages by 25 percent” and attacking seniority rights.

Maurice Rozon, a 35-year veteran in the plant, said the company’s attacks on seniority “would allow foremen to work on the plant floor leaving workers like myself unemployed.”

About 760 workers at National Steel Car are currently on layoff, and the 600 remaining workers have been working only four days a week. In 2006, some 2,400 USW members worked in the plant.

—Beverly Bernardo

### Ship demolition workers in India win strike

Workers dismantling ships at the Alang/Sosiya shipyard in Gujarat, India, beat back an attempt by the company to reduce their wages, reported the International Metalworkers Federation April 9. The boss wanted to cut their pay by almost 20 percent.

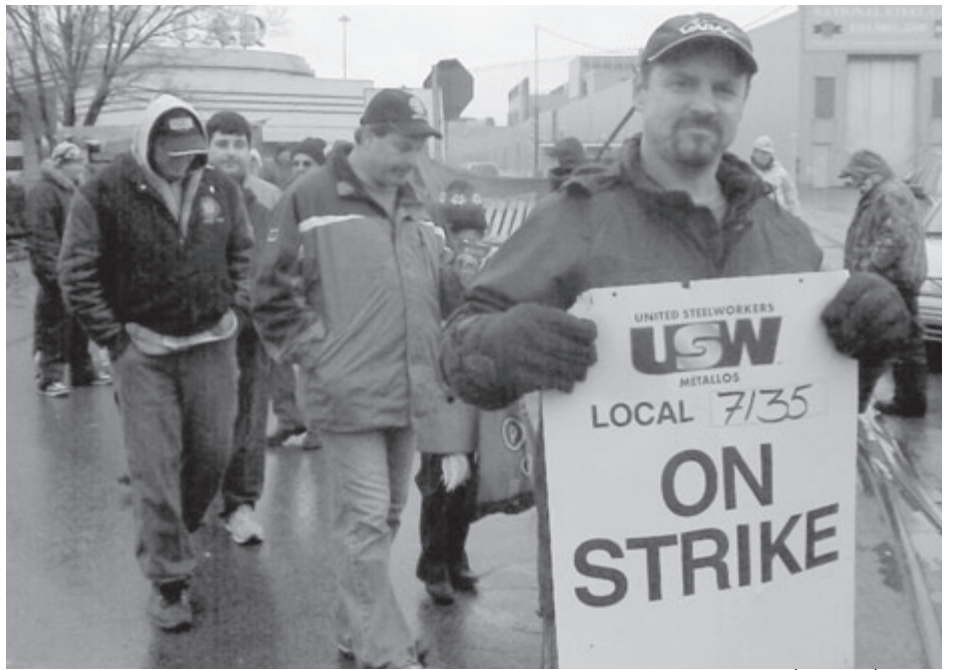
On March 23 and 24 more than 20,000 members of the recently formed union in the shipyard put down their tools in protest. The federation statement said the company used the global economic crisis to justify its action even though the amount of work it demanded had increased.

During the strike the company attempted to obtain an injunction against union representatives entering the yard to talk with workers.

—Sam Manuel

### Netherlands airport cleaners end strike in victory

Cleaners at the Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands ended their strike April 8 after the company acceded



Militant/Mark Grieve

United Steelworkers picket line at National Steel Car, Hamilton, Ontario, April 6. Union members voted to go on strike in face of company demands to slash wages by 25 percent.

to most of their demands. The company has agreed to provide a travel allowance and to give the workers a 50-euro bonus (1 euro = US\$1.32). The workers will also get a one-off annual bonus of 0.5 percent of their gross yearly income. The company agreed to provide workers with a suit-

able lunchroom.

The three-month campaign for the union’s demands included a four-day strike. Union officials said the campaign was in preparation for contract negotiations scheduled to start at the end of the year.

—Sam Manuel

## Workers in Greece say, ‘Bosses should pay for crisis, not us’

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS—Tens of thousands of striking workers and others marched here on Parliament and in cities across the country April 2. Union banners at the march said, “The bosses should pay for the crisis, not workers.”

The General Confederation of Workers of Greece and ADEDY, the public-sector labor federation, called a 24-hour general strike to protest government austerity measures, cuts in public spend-

ing, and rising unemployment, now at 9 percent officially.

Some 700 members of the Union of Workers at United Textiles (UWUT) have set up a camp across from the Ministry of Economy, where they have been staying in shifts of about 100 workers at a time.

Maria Kouvatli, a machine operator, told the *Militant*, “I started work at the company mill when I was 15 years old. Now I am 45 and they are saying that

they will shut down the mills. Who’s going to hire me at this age? We’ve been here for a week already to say to the government that this cannot be allowed to happen.”

“There is a general crisis in the textile industry in the country,” added Ilias Harisis, president of the UWUT local in Naoussa in northern Greece. The country’s textile production has dropped by 22 percent from a year ago. According to Harisis, unemployment has reached 52 percent in Naoussa, a major center for textiles and canning.

United Textiles’ owners say they cannot continue to operate because the banks have cut their credit line. Harisis said the workers have been without pay for six months, with 1,200 of them facing unemployment.

“We think that the company is capable of staying in business. It has had big customers such as Benetton and Sisley in the past,” Harisis said. The workers are demanding the government extend a credit line of 35 million euros (1 euro =

US\$1.32) to United Textiles so production can continue.

“Six months without pay and yet we are also not eligible for unemployment benefits since we are employed,” said Kouvatli. “How are we to live?”

In a show of solidarity, other textile unions are covering hotel bills for workers taking part in the encampment near the ministry building. Their meals are provided free at Bank of Greece employee cafeterias.

The crisis in textile is part of an overall contraction of 12.6 percent in manufacturing in Greece. Metals production is down 28.9 percent. Commodity shipping rates are down 92 percent. Agricultural commodity prices are down substantially as well—cotton by 48 percent, olive oil by 40 percent, and dairy products by 15 percent. Overall exports by Greece are down 22 percent.

Over the past decade, Greece’s major banks have invested some 55 billion euros in the Balkans, acquiring a significant percentage of those countries’ credit.

## U.S. agriculture head says ‘food scarcity’ is threat to stable world

BY BEN JOYCE

Increasing social instability amid rising world hunger was a top concern at an April 18–20 meeting of agricultural ministers of the Group of Eight industrialized countries. The group gathered in Italy to discuss international food output and the political consequences of rising scarcity.

“This is not just about food security,” said U.S. agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack in an interview published in the April 20 *Financial Times*. “This is about national security, it is about environmental security,” he said. The article notes, “Washington’s worries about the global food crisis go well beyond its humanitarian implications.”

“I can figure out there are only three things that could happen if people do not have food: people could riot, that they have done; people migrate to places where there is food, which creates additional challenges; or people die,” said Vilsack.

In early 2008 riots over rising food prices took place around the semicolonial world, including in Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt, Haiti, and numerous parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Meanwhile, major food commodities traders hoarded stocks of corn, wheat, and soybeans equal to half the amount in all storage silos in the United States in order to keep the prices at a profitable level.

Profits in the first quarter of 2008 of agribusiness giants Monsanto, Cargill, and Bunge rose by 108 percent, 86

percent, and 1,964 percent respectively compared to the previous year.

U.S. Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair warned in February that the global economic crisis represented a greater threat to world security than “terrorism” or the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 4, 1984

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic, April 25—A general strike occurred here today. The strike comes after two days of rebellion against government-ordered price increases. Hundreds of people have been injured and thousands arrested. More than 45 people have been killed so far—most by the regime’s police.

The rebellion began April 23 following a 24-hour strike called by business organizations and the Dominican Party of Liberation, led by ex-president Juan Bosch. The one-day strike was called to protest Pres. Salvador Jorge Blanco’s order to raise prices on all imported goods by 200 percent as well as price increases on many basic foodstuffs. The austerity measures were part of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund for a \$599 million loan.



May 4, 1959

Not since they greeted heroes of the 1905 Russian Revolution, have the American people extended the kind of welcome to a revolutionary they accorded to Fidel Castro during his 11-day tour of Washington, D.C., New York City, and Boston.

Castro, for his part, played up to his role as a leader of a popular revolution. He did not change from his green “26th of July Movement” uniform into mufti at any time.

Wherever he went, his supporters carried banners proclaiming “Long Live the Cuban Revolution!”

To some Americans, the Cuban events seemed to contain food for further thought. “How do you make a revolution?” one New York taxi driver, for example, asked of his fare, following the Castro visit.



May 5, 1934

MINNEAPOLIS, April 30—The surge of labor’s ranks toward the organizations of struggle has a meaning for the profit-mad bosses. They understand that the temper of the workers, who have suffered long years of hunger in the bread lines, is mounting.

The “America First” parade and demonstration in Minneapolis marched in perfect step with these labor-hating bosses and their tools in the Welfare Board. What must be made crystal clear is that a number of active workers, members and, in some cases officials of the Minneapolis Central Council of Workers, played an active role in the work organizing this disgraceful performance. The Minneapolis Central Council of Workers must lose no time in cleaning its ranks of these twilight elements.



# Lessons from fight against fascism in 1930s Spain

*Printed below is an excerpt from Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain by Felix Morrow, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. A fascist uprising led by Gen. Francisco Franco was launched on July 17, 1936, in the Spanish colony of Morocco and quickly spread to Spain. Within three days almost all of the country's 50 garrisons and the vast majority of the capitalist rulers joined Franco's forces. Five months earlier a People's Front government—a coalition in which the Communist Party, Socialist Party, and other working-class organizations were subordinated to the radical bourgeoisie—had been elected. In face of the fascist rebellion, that government refused to arm the workers. The piece below, from the chapter titled "The revolution of July 19," describes the massive independent working-class response to the fascist uprising. Copyright © 1936 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FELIX MORROW

The Barcelona proletariat prevented the capitulation of the republic to the fascists. On July 19, almost barehanded, they stormed the first barracks successfully. By 2 P.M. the next day they were masters of Barcelona.

It was not accidental that the honor



Workers organized by the National Confederation of Labor mobilize in Barcelona, Spain, July 1936 to combat fascist uprising.

of initiating the armed struggle against fascism belongs to the Barcelona proletariat. Chief seaport and industrial center of Spain, concentrating in it and the surrounding industrial towns of Catalonia nearly half the industrial proletariat of Spain, Barcelona has always been the revolutionary vanguard. The parliamentary reformism of the socialist-led UGT [General Workers Union] had never found a foothold there. The united socialist and Stalinist parties (the PSUC [Socialist Party of Catalonia]) had fewer members on July 19 than the POUM [Workers Party of Marxist Unification]. The workers were almost wholly organized in the CNT [National Confederation of Labor], whose suffering and persecution under both the monarchy and republic had imbued its masses with a militant anti-capitalist tradition, although its anarchist philosophy gave it no systematic direction. But, before this philosophy was to reveal its tragic inadequacy, the CNT reached historic heights in its successful struggle against the forces of General Goded.

As in Madrid, the Catalan government refused to arm the workers. CNT and POUM emissaries, demanding arms, were smilingly informed they could pick up those dropped by wounded Assault Guards.

But CNT and POUM workers during the afternoon of the 18th were raiding sporting goods stores for rifles, construction jobs for sticks of dynamite, fas-

cist homes for concealed weapons. With the aid of a few friendly Assault Guards, they had seized a few racks of government rifles. (The revolutionary workers had painstakingly gathered a few guns and pistols since 1934.) That—and as many autos as they could find—was all the workers had when, at five o'clock on the morning of the 19th, the fascist officers began to lead detachments from the barracks.

Isolated engagements before paving-stone barricades led to a general engagement in the afternoon. And here political weapons more than made up for the superior armament of the fascists. Heroic workers stepped forward from the lines to call upon the soldiers to learn why they were shooting down their fellow toilers. They fell under rifle and machine-gun fire, but others took their place. Here and there a soldier began shooting wide. Soon bolder ones turned on their officers. Some nameless military genius—perhaps he died then—seized the moment and the mass of workers abandoned their prone positions and surged forward. The first barracks were taken. General Goded was captured that afternoon. With arms from the arsenals the workers cleaned up Barcelona. Within a few days, all Catalonia was in their hands.

Simultaneously the Madrid proletariat was mobilizing. The left socialists distributed their scant store of arms, saved from October, 1934. Barricades went up

on key streets and around the Montaña barracks. Workers' groups were looking for reactionary leaders. At dawn of the 19th the first militia patrols took their places. At midnight the first shots were exchanged with the barracks. But it was not until the next day, when the great news came from Barcelona, that the barracks were stormed.

Valencia, too, was soon saved from the fascists. Refused arms by the governor appointed by [Prime Minister Manuel] Azaña, the workers prepared to face the troops with barricades, cobblestones and kitchen knives—until their comrades within the garrison shot the officers and gave arms to the workers.

The Asturian miners, fighters of the Commune of October, 1934, outfitted a column of five thousand dynamiters for a march on Madrid. It arrived there on the 20th, just after the barracks had been taken, and took up guard duty in the streets.

In Málaga, strategic port opposite Morocco, the ingenious workers, unarmed at first, had surrounded the reactionary garrison with a wall of gasoline-fired houses and barricades.

In a word, without so much as by-your-leave to the government, the proletariat had begun a war to the death against the fascists. The initiative had passed out of the hands of the republican bourgeoisie.

Most of the army was with the fascists. It must be confronted by a new army. Every workers' organization proceeded to organize militia regiments, equip them, and send them to the front. The government had no direct contact with the workers' militia. The organizations presented their requisitions and payrolls to the government, which handed over supplies and funds which the organizations distributed to the militias. Such officers as remained in the Loyalist camp were assigned as "technicians" to the militias. Their military proposals were transmitted to the militiamen through the worker officers. Those Civil and Assault Guards still adhering to the government soon disappeared from the streets. In the prevailing atmosphere the government was compelled to send them to the front. Their police duties were taken over by worker-police and militiamen.

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April

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# Cuba's example is focus of New Jersey meeting

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEWARK, New Jersey—A lively discussion on the Cuban Revolution was held here April 20 at Rutgers University. Nearly 60 people, most of them students, participated in a panel presentation and discussion on the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*.

The meeting was organized by Latinos United Networking America (LUNA) and cosponsored by the Rutgers Program Board, Latinos Siempre Unidos, Organization of African Students, Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, La Unidad Latina, and Omega Phi Chi, a multicultural sorority.

*Our History Is Still Being Written* tells the stories of Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong, three generals of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba of Chinese ancestry. In the 1950s, as teenagers, each of them joined the revolutionary movement in

Lomas read from an article José Martí, a leader of Cuba's independence struggle in the 19th century and prominent Latin American writer, had written in 1882, just months before the U.S. government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. That act barred individuals from China and elsewhere in Asia from immigrating to the United States on the basis of race. It remained in effect until 1943.

"Racism hasn't been eliminated from Cuba," Lomas said, but the example of these three generals—Choy, Chui, and Sío Wong—shows the progress accomplished by the Cuban Revolution.

## 'Young people like us'

"These three generals were young people like us," Arrieta said. He noted that the Cuban Revolution sets an example throughout Latin America. "They provide support in agriculture, education, and medical care to countries all over the world. I especially liked the point Moisés Sío Wong makes about the internationalist spirit of the Cuban Revolution."

"The example of the Cuban Revolution is more urgent today because of the deepest crisis of the world capitalist system since the first part of the 20th century," Koppel said. "It helps answer the question of whether working people have the capacity to change these conditions."

"These three generals didn't start out as socialists. They just weren't going to accept the conditions under the U.S.-supported Batista dictatorship. And then when they overthrew the dictator-



Militant/Mike Fitzsimmons

Professor Laura Lomas of Rutgers University in Newark speaks April 20 on struggles by students at Rutgers in the 1960s and progress made in Cuba to end legacy of racism. Sharing the panel is student leader Mario Arrieta (left) and Martín Koppel of Pathfinder Press.

ship in 1959, they didn't stop," stated Koppel. It was measures like the campaign to wipe out illiteracy, the agrarian reform, and other steps that drew the ire of Washington. In response, the Cuban toilers took over the factories and landholdings and defended the revolution arms in hand.

## Racial situation in Cuba today

"What is the racial situation like in Cuba today?" asked a professor during the discussion period.

"Racist oppression is integral to capitalism," Koppel explained. "The Cuban Revolution and its leadership immediately took steps to eradicate it, including outlawing all discriminatory practices in public and private business. But they also recognize that while the revolution uprooted racism, eliminating its legacy takes much longer and requires conscious measures."

"Ten U.S. administrations, every one since the 1959 revolution, have tried to overthrow the Cuban Revolution," Koppel said in response to a question about whether U.S. president Barack Obama would ease relations with Cuba. This is because "the U.S. ruling class is afraid of the Cuban example that it is possible to stand up to the imperialist rul-

ers—including right here in the United States—and win."

A question posed by Arrieta provoked a lively discussion at the end of the program. "Is a revolution possible in the U.S.?" he asked the audience.

"Things aren't bad enough," one student responded. "People have to hit rock bottom first."

Tom Baumann, a member of the Young Socialists, noted that all of history—including the Civil War and war for independence in the United States—is a history of revolutionary struggle.

The professor who had spoken earlier noted that in many ways the civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s was a revolution in how Blacks and others saw themselves.

Koppel said the labor and civil rights battles of the 1930s, and 1950s and '60s, as well as the ongoing fight today led by immigrant workers for legalization, show the capacity of the U.S. working class—if they have the proper leadership—to take on the U.S. rulers and win.

After the program several dozen students took up LUNA president Natasha Carles-Novikov's invitation to stay around to enjoy empanadas and talk with the speakers.



Militant/Mike Fitzsimmons

Nearly 60 people attend presentation of *Our History Is Still Being Written*, organized by Latinos United Networking America.

Cuba to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

The speakers were Laura Lomas, an English professor and director of Women's Studies at Rutgers and author of *Translating Empire: José Martí, Migrant Latino Subjects, and American Modernities*; Mario Arrieta, a Rutgers student and leader of LUNA; and Martín Koppel, who took part in interviewing the Chinese-Cuban generals for the book, published by Pathfinder Press. Arrieta also chaired the program.

Lomas noted that this year is the 40th anniversary of the student takeovers at Rutgers and other colleges in New Jersey and New York that demanded, and in many cases won, Black, Latino, and Asian studies programs. "Many of these programs are now under attack," she said. "Our history really is still being written, as we need to revisit these issues." She noted that although 18 percent of the students at this university's Newark campus are Latino and 24 percent are Asian, there is neither a Latino Studies nor an Asian Studies program.

## Students in Montreal discuss Cuban Revolution

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL—A panel presentation here at Marianopolis College April 14 on the Pathfinder Press book *Our History Is Still Being Written—The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* evoked interest in the Cuban Revolution from the students and faculty in attendance. Some of the students are due to leave May 29 for a 10-day study trip in Cuba.

The meeting was organized by the Third World Studies Certificate (TWSC) at this English-language college, which is part of the pre-university system in Quebec. TWSC trips have taken students to Chiapas, Mexico, and for the

last few years to Cuba. Nineteen students signed up to participate this year.

Panelists at the event were Dolores Chew, who teaches history and is chair of the Liberal and Creative Arts Department Faculty; Philip Dann, an English teacher; and Martín Koppel, who participated in conducting the interviews for *Our History Is Still Being Written*. Eighteen people, including 12 students, attended the meeting.

Introducing the discussion Chew pointed to the sections of the book that deal with Cuba's participation in the military defense of Angola against an invasion by the South African apartheid army between 1975 and 1990. Thousands of Cuban volunteer troops helped the Angolans beat back the racist invaders. "If it were not for Cuba, the apartheid system of South Africa might still be alive," Chew said.

"These are not retired generals," Dann told the students. "The book is full of concrete information on what they are doing today, for example, leading the environmental cleanup of Havana harbor, and working with young people in the education system promoting the ideals of the revolution."

Dann encouraged students to take the book out of the school library and read it. The college library has a copy in both

English and Chinese.

Koppel explained that Pathfinder Press published the book because "Cuba is a practical example of how to fight and win, of how workers and farmers can take political power and use it to build a society to satisfy the needs of the majority."

"This is an example for today because of the worldwide crisis of the capitalist system, which is in its initial stages," he explained. "In face of decades of intertwined wars and economic and social crisis the future of humanity will be decided by the capacity of working people to make a revolution and take state power. That's why for fighting workers and youth this has valuable lessons."

Questions covered China-Cuba relations; the nature of Stalinism; the 1961 literacy campaign carried out by tens of thousands of youth after the 1959 revolution; the role of the revolutionary tribunals in dealing with the former dictatorship's torturers after the 1959 seizure of power; the role of Cuban medical teams today in countries like Equatorial Guinea and Venezuela; and whether the Obama administration's move to allow more visits of Cuban Americans to the island would undermine the revolution.

## For further reading

### Our History Is Still Being Written The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution

Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong talk about the historic place of Chinese immigration to Cuba, as well as more than five decades of revolutionary action and internationalism, from Cuba to Angola, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. We see how millions of ordinary men and women like them changed the course of history, becoming different human beings in the process. Also in Spanish and Chinese. \$20

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# Benito Juárez: Mexican revolutionary democrat

BY STEVE WARSHALL

Benito Juárez was born in rural Oaxaca in 1806, while Mexico was still a colony of Spain. At age 13, Juárez could neither read, write, nor speak Spanish. A Zapotec Indian, Juárez was born into a society that had been built on the brutal exploitation and oppression of the indigenous peoples.

The Spanish conquistadores imposed in Mexico a particularly brutal brand of feudal social relations—including enslavement and outright murder. In barely 100 years it reduced the Indian population to less than 1 million, which by some estimates had been more than 20 million in 1519.

To make up for the lack of labor, the Spanish rulers brought in slaves from Africa, reaching nearly 250,000 during the 17th and 18th centuries, to labor in the fields and mines. The combination of indigenous peoples, Africans, and Europeans led to a caste system that determined much about prospects of any individual in the colony.

When the toilers of Mexico rose in rebellion in 1810, led by Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos, they were fighting for their freedom—freedom from Spain; full rights for mestizos, mulattos, and Indians; an end to compulsory labor; and an end to all the privileges lorded over them by the aristocracy and Catholic clergy. They demanded land—including the best areas often held by the Church and the aristocratic families.

The revolt was crushed by the local aristocrats in alliance with the colonial army. By 1820, events in Europe had made it difficult for the Spanish crown to defend its colonial possessions. The Mexican creoles decided that their time had come at last. Having defeated the toilers' fight for freedom, they took advantage of a political crisis in Spain and proclaimed independence in the form of a constitutional monarchy. As aristocratic conservative and liberal factions jockeyed with each other for power, the country settled into an unstable republic, still tied to the vestiges of feudalism.

In 1844, U.S. president James K. Polk was elected on a platform of annexation of Texas. The pro-slavery Democrat also demanded that the established border

with Mexico be moved 150 miles to the south across the Nueces River to the Río Bravo, known in the United States as the Rio Grande. Demands were also made for the territories of New Mexico and California. Although elected by a narrow margin, the victory of the capitalist slaveholders' candidate guaranteed war.

Mexico, dominated by the landed aristocracy, was no match for the more developed capitalist social relations of the United States, albeit distorted by slavery. While there was fierce resistance in combat, the technical superiority of the U.S. forces overwhelmed defenders. By 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo codified loss of half Mexico's territory.

## Movement to overthrow dictatorship

A friend of the family he lived with became impressed with the young Juárez and arranged for his education at a Catholic seminary. Juárez continued his studies at the Institute of Science and Art where he read works by rationalist philosophers of the Enlightenment. Before receiving his law degree in 1834, he was elected a city councilman in Oaxaca and became known as a defender of Indian rights. In 1841 he became a civil judge and in 1847 was elected governor of Oaxaca. His term in office was marked by a measure he supported allowing the confiscation of church lands.

In 1853 Antonio López de Santa Anna returned to power in Mexico City and Juárez was one of a group of liberals expelled from the country. Finding himself in New Orleans, Juárez joined forces with other liberals and organized a revolutionary movement aimed at the overthrow of the dictatorship. During his exile, Juárez supported himself by working in a cigarette factory.

The next year liberal general Juan Alvarez and other revolutionaries proclaimed the *Plan de Ayutla*. Juárez and the New Orleans group joined the movement, which overthrew the Santa Anna dictatorship in the fall of 1854. Alvarez became president and Juárez was appointed minister of justice, producing the "Ley Juárez," abolishing clerical immunity by limiting jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts. That period also



Fresco painting by Diego Rivera portrays Juárez (top) surrounded by figures from various periods of Mexico's history of rebellion against slavery, peonage, and for independence.

produced the "Ley Lerdo," which ended church ownership of the land. Church property was nationalized with the largest holdings sold at auction.

With Mexico now a secular democratic republic, the clergy and aristocrats launched a civil war—the War of the Reform—in December of 1857. Juárez, then chief justice of the Supreme Court, was captured in Guadalajara. He was saved from execution by firing squad when the soldiers were persuaded not to shoot. Eventually Juárez escaped, reorganized the resistance, and was declared president of Mexico in 1858. He won the support of liberals and toilers both inside and outside of Mexico. He also received the support of U.S. president Abraham Lincoln. In 1861 the pro-reform forces retook Mexico City.

## European monarchs intervene

As the civil war in the United States began, European monarchs looked for ways to intervene in the Americas. With Mexico now verging on bankruptcy, Juárez declared a two-year moratorium on payment of the foreign debt. In response the British, Spanish, and French crowns all sent troops to occupy the port of Veracruz. Juárez negotiated terms with the British and Spanish governments and they withdrew their forces. The French rulers rejected negotiations and launched an invasion.

After Mexico routed the invasion at the battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, the French government sent massive reinforcements and soon took the capital. They installed Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph, an Austrian nobleman, as "Em-

peror" of the country with the support of Mexican conservatives.

As Karl Marx observed, in Mexico, before the American Civil War, "slavery is hidden under the form of *peonage*. By means of advances, repayable in labour, which are handed down from generation to generation, not only the individual labourer, but his family, become, *de facto*, the property of other persons and their families. Juarez abolished *peonage*. The so-called Emperor Maximilian re-established it by a decree, which, in the House of Representatives at Washington, was aptly denounced as a decree for the re-introduction of slavery into Mexico."

The government was forced to move to Ciudad Juárez on the U.S. border to organize the resistance and continue the fight. Aided by Lincoln and the Union Army the *Juaristas* carried out three years of revolutionary struggle and guerrilla war. French soldiers were forced to withdraw and Maximilian was captured and executed. On July 15, 1867, Juárez returned to Mexico City and resumed the presidency, using the next five years in office to take the first steps toward building a modern nation.

The legacy of Benito Juárez is the abolition of aristocratic and church property and the class relations that came with them. These were replaced with capitalist property and bourgeois social relations without which there could be no industry, no modern nation, and most importantly, no modern proletariat—the gravediggers of the capitalist system.

History will gratefully remember Juárez for his contributions to this cause.

## Union officials echo bosses' 'immigration reform'

BY SETH GALINSKY

The two main union federations in the United States, Change to Win and the AFL-CIO, released a joint position on immigration reform April 14. The proposals echo the views of many capitalist bosses who depend on the superexploitation of immigrant labor.

In their announcement for a "roadmap toward real reform," Joseph Hansen, president of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, spoke for Change to Win alongside John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO. They were joined by Eliseo Medina, executive vice president of the Service Employees International Union, and Arturo Rodriguez, president of the United Farm Workers.

The "roadmap" has five main proposals: formation of an independent commission to "manage future flows" and "determine the number of foreign

workers to be admitted for employment purposes, based on labor market needs"; "a secure and effective worker authorization mechanism"; "rational operational control of the border"; "adjustment of status" for some undocumented workers already in the United States; and "improvement, not expansion" of guest worker programs.

The union bureaucrats complain that the current system has "failed to curtail illegal immigration" and say that rounding up and deporting the 12 million or more workers without papers "is not a realistic solution." Instead they propose that more "effective" enforcement be achieved by "trained professional border patrol agents and not vigilantes or local law enforcement officials." They want to supplement this with a system to verify work authorization that "relies on

secure identification methodology," code words for a national ID system.

The joint announcement says that their proposal "is a critical sign of support for the Administration and Congress to address immigration reform. . ."

On May 1, 2006, millions of immigrants and their supporters marched in the streets across the United States demanding legalization, proclaiming, "We are workers, not criminals." Those actions defeated a bill that would have made it a felony for undocumented immigrants to be in the United States.

Largely as a result of stricter enforcement of anti-worker immigration laws, Latinos now make up 40 percent of the federal prison population. Almost half of Latinos in jail are there for the alleged "crime" of being in the United States without papers.

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# Immigration raids, patrols on borders to continue

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

President Barack Obama announced in early April that he will present his administration’s immigration “reform” proposals sometime in May, opening a debate in Congress this fall. The legislation would strengthen cop patrols on the border and institute “a national system for verifying the legal immigration status of new workers,” unnamed administration officials told the *New York Times*.

Obama has made clear in previous statements that the 12 million undocumented workers living and working in the United States would face a series of obstacles before obtaining legal residency or citizenship.

“This is not going to be a free ride. It’s not going to be some instant amnesty,” he said to a town hall meeting in California in March. “What’s going to happen is you are going to pay a significant fine. You are going to learn English. You are going to the back of the line” to apply.

The last time this issue was addressed by Congress was in 2007, when sharp divisions within the ruling class prevented any immigration bill from becoming law.

At the end of February, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) cops arrested 28 immigrant workers employed at Yamato Engine Specialists in Bellingham, Washington. It was the first workplace raid conducted under the Obama administration. After one of the workers was deported, the 27 others were allowed to return to their jobs with temporary work permits that expire once the ICE “investigation” at the plant ends. Homeland Security Secretary Ja-

net Napolitano has made clear that other worksite “inspections” are continuing, and there will be no halt to arresting undocumented workers.

A study recently released by Seton Hall Law School documents the extent to which New Jersey cops have been harassing Latinos, using a state’s attorney general’s directive in 2007 authorizing them to ask about the immigration status of those they arrest. In the first six months after the directive was issued, the cops referred 10,000 people to ICE, but only 1,417 of them were charged with immigration violations. Many of the others were legal residents or U.S. citizens.

In Colorado, the Weld County Sheriff’s Office authorized the seizure from a Greeley tax preparer’s office of thousands of tax returns filed by undocumented workers. Local authorities used these documents to accuse more than 1,000 workers of using fraudulent Social Security numbers. More than 60 of these workers were arrested and warrants issued to arrest 61 others.

On April 13, in response to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, a state judge issued a preliminary injunction halting any further investigation into the tax returns. The cases against those already in court are still being prosecuted.

In another development, a study by the Pew Hispanic Center reports that as of 2008 there are 4 million children of undocumented workers born in the United States, making them U.S. citizens, an increase from 2.7 million in 2003. One-third of these children were living in poverty in 2007 and 25 percent were without health insurance in 2008.



Workers in chains leave court after 2008 factory raid in Laurel, Mississippi. Homeland Security chief Janet Napolitano says workplace raids will continue.

## Chicago May Day action

Continued from front page

Union (SEIU) Local 1, recounted her decision to leave Poland in 1976, where she was a teacher, and move to the United States.

In 1986 Miklewicz received papers along with millions of others as part of an amnesty. “It hurts me to see the troubles that many immigrants are going through again,” she said, pointing to the need for a large turnout May 1 to demand legal rights for all immigrants.

Alfonso Bravo, a grocery store worker and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 881, and Catherine de Santiago, a factory worker and member of Teamsters Local 743, also spoke representing their unions. Bravo, who addressed the gathering in Spanish, urged “the entire community to march with us May 1.”

Laura Garza, vice president of SEIU

Local 1, chaired the news conference and made opening remarks.

The flyer and news release calling the conference and Garza’s remarks focused on some of the themes labor officials here have sounded at recent actions that deemphasize the demand for legalization. These include a general reference to immigration reform, passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, and a so-called economic recovery for all.

“On May 1, 2009,” the flyer read, “thousands of people will march for an economic recovery that works for everyone—including freedom for workers to form unions and a level playing field for all workers, regardless of immigration status.”

Melvin Maclin, vice president of United Electrical Workers Local 1110 and a former Republic Windows and Doors worker, sounded a somewhat different emphasis—one that was echoed by other speakers.

Pointing to the Bank of America offices across the street, Maclin said, “We fought Bank of America and Republic Windows and Doors and we won. None of that would have been possible without a union, without workers who are native-born and workers who are immigrants being able to stand and fight together. That’s why it’s important for us to turn out on May Day, because immigrant rights and labor rights go hand in hand.”

Last December unionists at Republic Windows and Doors sat in, occupying the plant, when the company attempted to dismiss workers without paying them severance and medical benefits. They won after six days.

Maria Hernandez, a laundry worker and member of Local 969 of the Chicago and Midwest Regional Joint Board of Workers United, described the preparations her union is making for the march.

The newly formed Workers United union is organizing weekly meetings of industrial laundry and garment workers in Chicago to build the May Day march. The meetings were moved from Monday to Saturday so that more workers could attend. Some members of the union are also attending march coalition planning meetings.

“We have an opportunity to send President Obama a clear message May 1,” she said in English and Spanish, “that what we want is legalization now.”

## Legalization for all immigrants! Join May Day actions!

### ARIZONA

#### Phoenix

Sat., May 2, 8 a.m. Wells Fargo Tower, 100 W. Washington. Tel.: 602-314-5870.

### CALIFORNIA

#### Fresno

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 5 p.m., Eaton Plaza. March: 6 p.m. Tel.: (559) 499-1178.

#### Los Angeles

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 1 p.m., Broadway and Olympic.

#### Riverside

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 4 p.m. Cesar Chavez Community Center. March to Riverside City Hall.

#### Oakland

Fri., May 1. Program: 3:30 p.m., Fruitvale Plaza. March: 4:30 p.m.

#### Santa Cruz

Fri., May 1. 4 p.m. - 9 p.m. Watsonville Plaza, Main St. and Beach St.

#### San Francisco

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 12 noon, Dolores Park. March to Civic Center. Tel.: (415) 720-0159.

#### San Jose

Fri., May 1. March: 4 p.m., Story and King Rd. Tel.: (408) 203-1696.

#### Santa Rosa

Fri., May 1. Rally: 3 p.m., 665 Sebastopol Rd. in Roseland Dollar Tree parking lot. March: 4:30 p.m.

#### Santa Ana

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 3:30 p.m., Civic Center Dr. between Broadway and Flower.

#### Watsonville

Fri., May 1. 4 p.m.-9 p.m., activities in Watsonville Plaza. March: 6 p.m.

### COLORADO

#### Greeley

Sat., May 2. Assemble: 1 p.m., Island Grove Park, 514 N. 14th Ave. Tel.: (970) 388-0834.

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 4 p.m., March: 5:30 p.m., 100 Chopin Plaza. Tel.: (786) 985-9048.

### GEORGIA

#### Atlanta

Sat., May 2. Assemble: 10 a.m., State Capitol.

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

Fri., May 1. Rally: 10 a.m., Union Park, corner of Ashland and Washington. March: 12 noon.

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Boston

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 2:30 p.m., Liberty Plaza in Central sq. Rally: 4:30 p.m., Glendale Park, Everett. Tel.: (617) 889-6080 or 387-9996.

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 10 a.m., W. Vernor and Woodmere. Rally: 12 noon, Clark Park. Tel.: (313) 580-5474 or 575-4933.

### MINNESOTA

#### Minneapolis

Fri., May 1. March: 4 p.m. Lake St and 13th Ave S. Street Festival: 5 p.m.-8 p.m. 29th St. and Nicollet Ave. Tel.: (651) 389-9174.

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

Fri., May 1. 11 a.m. Assemble: Lincoln Park, Broad St. Tel.: (732) 246-2900.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 4 p.m., Union Square, 14th St. and Broadway. March: 5 p.m. Tel.: (212) 561-1744.

Fri., May 1, 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Madison Square Park, 23rd St. and Broadway. Tel.: (212) 388-2119.

### NORTH CAROLINA

#### Charlotte

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 12 noon, Trade St. and Tryon St. March: 6 p.m.

### OREGON

#### Portland

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 1 p.m., South Park Blocks. Rally: 4 p.m. March: 5 p.m. Tel.: (503) 236-5573.

#### Salem

Fri., May 1. March and rally: 11 a.m.- 4 p.m. Oregon State Capitol. Tel.: (541) 485-8633.

### TEXAS

#### Austin

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 6 p.m., Texas Capitol south steps. March: 7 p.m.

#### San Antonio

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 6 p.m. Milam Park. Tel.: (210) 299-2666.

### WASHINGTON

#### Bellingham

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 5:30 pm., Maritime Heritage Park, 1600 C St. March: 6:30 p.m. to Cornwall Park, 3428 Meridian.

#### Seattle

Fri., May 1. Rally: 3:30 p.m., St. Mary’s Church, 611 20th Ave. S. March: 4 p.m. Tel.: (206) 324-6044.

#### Yakima

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 4:00 p.m., Miller Park, 3rd St. and “E.” Tel: 509-834-1931

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 3 p.m., Malcolm X Park, 16th St. and W St. NW. March: 4 p.m. Tel.: (888) 624-2001.

### WISCONSIN

#### Madison

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 11 a.m., Brittingham Park, W. Washington Ave. and Park St.

#### Milwaukee

Fri., May 1. Assemble: 12 noon, 1027 S. 5th St. Program at Veterans Park. Tel.: (414) 643-1620.



# Boston meeting debates course for Palestinians

BY KEVIN DWIRE

BOSTON—More than 500 people from around the world participated in a conference on Palestine at the University of Massachusetts campus here March 28 and 29. The conference, entitled “One State for Palestine/Israel: A Country for All Its Citizens?” was sponsored by the Trans Arab Research Institute (TARI) and the William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences of the University of Massachusetts.

The event featured presentations by 36 professors and activists, mostly residing in the United States and the United Kingdom, but also some from Palestine and Israel. Among the panels were: “Is the two state settlement feasible?” “The vision: one country, one state,” “Strategies for building one country,” and others.

Opening the meeting Dr. Hani Faris, TARI acting chairperson, said that once the invitation to the conference was posted on the Internet it had quickly filled to overflowing and people had to be turned away. “The manner in which the Web site spread and the number of people who registered or wanted to register was a clear indication as to the level of interest on an international scale in the idea of the one state,” he said.

He told participants that the conference had been attacked for being anti-Israeli and even anti-Semitic, and also for betraying historic Palestinian rights. “The attacks on the conference by both sides,” Faris said, “are principally due to the fact that the idea of the one state is

the least understood for what it is and what it is not in both the Israeli and Palestinian vocabulary.”

Many panelists pointed to the “fragmentation” of the Palestinian leadership, and the need to build a new one. Several referred to the example of the grassroots leadership that came forward in the occupied territories during the first intifada in 1987.

Speakers presented different views on their approach to Palestinians living in Israel who have citizenship but not equal rights. Some called for them to be included in any new leadership and the need for a civil rights-style movement in Israel. Others said “those Palestinians see themselves as Israelis and do not want to threaten their status.”

Many speakers pointed to the movement for “Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS)” as a tactic to weaken Israel and put an end to what they called “Israeli apartheid.” They drew comparisons to the divestment movement waged against the apartheid regime led by the African National Congress (ANC) in the 1980s. “Israel supports one state—an apartheid state,” said Ali Abunimah, who runs the Web site Electronic Intifada. He said activists need to “mobilize support for Palestine and support BDS.”

Omar Barghouti, a founder of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, said that a new state must respect the rights of all who live there. Then he added, “How do you convince the Israelis? Who cares. It



Skip Schiel

Panel (inset) at “One State for Palestine/Israel: A Country for All Its Citizens?” conference. From left: Ilan Pappé, professor at University of Exeter; Leila Farsakh, professor at University of Massachusetts; Omar Barghouti, Palestinian activist; and Ghada Karmi, professor at London Metropolitan University. Audience (above) heard variety of views on Palestinian struggle.

is not about convincing, but resisting.”

Karma Nabulsi, a lecturer at Oxford University, and Ghada Karmi, a professor at London Metropolitan University, pointed to the example of the ANC. Karmi said the ANC presented a very clear message in its program—the Freedom Charter, which called for a democratic, nonracial South Africa—and opened its arms to whites who would abandon apartheid.

Joel Kovel, a professor at Bard College, was among those arguing that Israel controls U.S. foreign policy. Barghouti also advanced this view, saying “Israel occupied the White House under Bush, and maybe under Obama.”

At the end of the conference Saree Makdisi, a professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, read a draft

statement prepared by the conference steering committee. It reaffirmed the idea of one state, “a country for all its citizens.” It called for “a just peace on the following principles”: the land belongs to all who live in it or have been expelled; that it be founded on equal rights for all; that there be a “just redress for decades of Zionist expropriation and discrimination.” The statement also called for the creation of a non-sectarian state with separation of church and state, the return of all refugees, and a non-discriminatory immigration policy.

There was limited time for discussion from the floor. One young woman questioned the call for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel, asking “What about the Israelis here for the conference?”

Laura Garza of the Socialist Workers Party raised the need for Palestinian and Israeli workers to build a leadership that can lead a movement for a democratic, secular Palestine and that can take power out of the hands of their common enemy, the capitalist class in Israel. She also spoke to the danger of anti-Semitism arising from BDS, pointing to boycotts of Jewish-owned businesses in Italy.

## Opposition to Cuba embargo at summit

Continued from front page  
travel to the island.

The inhumane embargo has been denounced repeatedly by the United Nations and increasingly by many governments in Latin America. Several heads of Latin states made it known they would challenge the embargo at the April 17–19 summit.

Leading up to the summit U.S. president Barack Obama sought to deflect criticism of Washington’s Cuba policy by lifting restrictions April 13 on travel for Cuban Americans visiting relatives on the island and on sending remittances to family members there.

Addressing a meeting in Venezuela April 16, Cuban president Raúl Castro said, “We have told them in public and in private that we are ready to discuss everything: human rights, freedom of the press, political prisoners, everything they want to discuss.” He was speaking at a meeting of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), a trade pact between several Latin American countries, including Cuba, to promote cooperation and development.

Castro went on to say Cuba is open to freeing those Washington terms “political prisoners” and sending them, along with their families, to the United States, if Washington frees the five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly held in U.S. jails for 10 years on frame-up “conspiracy charges.”

At the opening session of the summit April 17, Argentine president Cristina Fernández, the first speaker, called for lifting the embargo, receiving applause from the audience, reported the Mexican daily *La Jornada*. “The blockade against

the sister nation of Cuba is an anachronism,” she said, noting that Cuba has “expressed its total readiness to talk with the United States on all issues.”

Other heads of governments spoke of the thousands of Cuban medical personnel who have volunteered their help in many Latin American countries.

Earlier in the week the governments of Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Dominica, and Honduras—gathered at the ALBA meeting in Venezuela—issued a declaration opposing the embargo and condemning the exclusion of Cuba from the summit.

Mexican president Felipe Calderon told CNN he had also urged Obama to end the embargo when the U.S. head of state visited Mexico April 16. Calderon said the embargo was “useless.”

In his speech to the summit April 17, Obama said, “The United States seeks a new beginning with Cuba.” The U.S. government is ready “to engage with the Cuban government on a wide range of issues—from drugs, migration, and economic issues, to human rights, free speech, and democratic reform.”

At a news conference at the conclusion of the summit, Obama said Castro’s offer to discuss issues such as human rights and political prisoners was “a sign of progress.” He also charged that Cuban authorities “take a lot off the top” in fees to process remittances sent to families in Cuba from relatives living in the United States.

Cuban leader Fidel Castro responded to Obama’s news conference in a “Reflections” column April 21.

“In affirming he’s prepared to discuss whatever issue with the U.S. president,

the Cuban president is saying that he’s not afraid to take up anything. It’s a demonstration of bravery and confidence in the principles of the revolution. Nobody should be surprised that he would talk about pardoning those punished in March 2003 and sending them all to the United States, if that country were ready to free the Cuban Five.”

Castro was referring to 75 Cubans convicted and jailed in 2003 for collaborating with U.S. officials to organize counterrevolutionary activities directed against the Cuban government.

As far as fees on remittances, Castro noted, “All countries charge fees for money transfers.” He added, “Not all Cubans have families abroad that send them money.” The Cuban government uses part of the fees it collects to make food, medicine, and other goods available to those Cubans most in need, Castro explained, a policy that is “just.”

Meanwhile, José Miguel Insulza, general secretary of the OAS, announced he would press for restoring Cuba’s membership in that body. The Cuban response was swift: “If one were to add up all the aggressive actions to which [the OAS] was an accomplice, they would span hundreds of thousands of lives and several bloody decades,” wrote Fidel Castro in his “Reflections” column April 15. “Insulza even offends us by presuming that we are eager to join the OAS.”

Raúl Castro told the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina, “We are not interested in the OAS.” Paraphrasing José Martí, Castro added, “Before returning to the OAS the North and South seas will join and a serpent will be born from an eagle’s egg.”

## Black farmers

Continued from page 3

told to wait,” said Boyd. “The government is refusing to pay the administrative costs to process the claims. They didn’t tell the banks, the auto companies, and the insurance companies to wait. Right is right and it doesn’t matter who is in the White House.”

In 2007 then-senator Obama sent Boyd a letter, which said in part, “I am pleased to join my colleague, Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa, in introducing S. 515, the Pigford Claims Remedy Act. . . . Please know I stand ready to continue my help.”

“How can they have a bill that doesn’t change what farmers are required to prove about discrimination but changes the compensations that farmers should receive?” asked Grant.

The farmers will rally at 10:30 a.m. outside the USDA offices. For more information contact the National Black Farmers Association at (804) 691-8528 or [www.blackfarmers.org](http://www.blackfarmers.org).

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# Legalize all immigrants now!

## Continued from front page

Day demonstrations across the United States to demand an immediate and permanent end to all deportations of immigrant workers and legalization now, without restrictions. We encourage working people and youth to take the day off work or school to do the same.

In 2006 some 2 million immigrants and their supporters took to the streets and won an important victory in beating back reactionary legislation that would have made it a felony to live and work in the United States without “proper papers.” As hundreds of thousands are being thrown onto the unemployment rolls each month in the wake of capitalist contraction in production, the example of May Day is needed even more.

As the economic crisis of capitalism deepens undocumented immigrants are scapegoated with the claim that they are stealing “our jobs.” But there is no such thing as an “American” job. The bosses go wherever they want to maximize profit; working people should defend our right to go wherever we want to get the highest price for our labor power.

The bosses want us to think that they and U.S.-born workers have common interests and that “*we*” are all Americans. But class-conscious workers understand that *we* have nothing in common with the bosses, it’s *us* versus *them*.

We are part of an international class of workers and see fellow workers and farmers—wherever they were born, whatever language they speak, whatever their skin color or religious views, or whatever piece of paper or ID they happen to carry—as our brothers and sisters. We welcome them with open arms and say, “Let’s fight together against *our* common enemies—the bosses—and for the interests of the working class,” such as jobs for all, higher wages, stronger unions, and free

government-guaranteed medical care.

The capitalist class and its government, from state-houses to Congress and the White House, are between a rock and a hard place. They can’t live without immigrant labor to be able to compete against their imperialist rivals in France, Germany, Britain, Canada, and Japan, much less against China. But they fear the potential power and example of immigrant workers who sought the American dream and found they have no choice but to fight against the American nightmare.

The so-called road to legalization is a road filled with so many roadblocks, twists and turns, and potholes—“get back to the end of the line,” pay outrageous fines, learn English, etc. and after all that, there is no guarantee of ever being given papers—that it is worse than a dead end or a road to nowhere, it’s a trap.

The union officials’ “roadmap” to immigration reform, unveiled by Change to Win and the AFL-CIO, is just as bad. It accepts the bosses’ argument that immigration must be controlled and the border sealed off. There is only one kind of immigration “reform” worth fighting for: full unconditional legalization for all immigrants.

There will be more battles to come as the capitalist ruling class tries to lower the value of our labor power and shore up their profits. Their goal is to drive down the living standard of all working people—native- and foreign-born.

The millions who turned out May Day 2006 revived May Day as a day of struggle in the United States. It is along this road that we can build a workers movement today that will be capable of taking power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers.

Join the May Day marches and rallies to demand: Release all those in jail for the so-called crime of working without papers! Stop the deportations! Legalize immigrants now! End the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border!

## Int’l day of action called for Troy Davis

### Continued from front page

“to bring some finality and certainty to the seemingly never-ending” appeals process.

Davis, 20 years old at the time, was arrested in 1989. No weapon, DNA, or other physical evidence linking Davis to the killing was produced. Seven of the nine witnesses that originally testified against Davis have since recanted or contradicted their statements. Some cited threats and pressure from the cops to finger Davis. New witnesses have come forward who say someone else committed the murder.

Dissenting from the decision, Judge Rosemary Barkett wrote, “The concept of punishing an innocent defendant with the penalty of death simply because he did not file his papers as early as he should have is draconian.” To do so in the face of a significant amount of evidence that may establish his actual innocence, she said, is “unconscionable

and unconstitutional.”

Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty called an emergency meeting April 23 to organize a response.

“It’s disgusting and aggravating that the court system holds Troy accountable for the indigent defense system not providing the resources necessary for a real defense,” Martina Correia, Davis’s sister, told the *Militant*. “This system did not produce justice.” She’s encouraging everyone to organize protests and work together.

The Circuit Court noted in its decision the impact of the worldwide fight against Davis’s execution. After its September 2008 denial of a stay of execution for Davis, the Georgia Board of Pardons and Parole took the “unusual step” of explaining its decision, the court said, because of extensive publicity of the case.

## LETTERS

### Jerusalem basketball team

People read about the Palestinian children’s orchestra that performed for Holocaust victims until Palestinian authorities intervened against it.

In Jerusalem there is a youth basketball league that has teams with mixed Jewish and Arab players and Jewish and Arab coaches, according to the *Jerusalem Post*. “I just wanted to play basketball. At the beginning the team felt separate, but we soon started passing to each other and we learned there is no ‘I’ in team,” 16-year-old Abu Dalu said, according to the *Post*.

Baxter Smith  
Baltimore, Maryland

### Clarification on ‘Zionism’

I applaud the clarification on the term “Zionist” in your April 13 issue. I heard “Zionist” used by all kinds of middle-class anti-Semites in areas far afield from Israel. This sickness will grow in the middle classes and infect many workers. We need the *Militant* to counter both support to the Israeli settler state and anti-Semitism.

### Anti-immigrant student group

In March more than 200 Vanderbilt University students protested outside a public lecture by Bay Buchanan, who was invited to speak

by Youth for Western Civilization. The group posted up signs advertising the meeting saying, “Save Our Culture,” “Build That Fence,” and “Deport Illegals.”

In her talk Buchanan called for substantially beefing up border police and deporting all undocumented workers, and said, “English is the foundation of the nation.”

Jack Willey  
Nashville, Tennessee

### Keep it up

Keep up the great work on the economic basics of Marxism and Afghan history, “Great Game” to present.

Rich Stuart  
Seattle, Washington

## U.S. in Somalia

### Continued from front page

bases inside Somalia. This could include targeted Special Operations strikes. She added that new efforts are also under way to freeze pirates’ assets.

The push for military intervention comes after pirates attacked the U.S.-flagged *Maersk Alabama* cargo ship off the coast of Somalia, taking captain Richard Phillips hostage.

U.S. Navy Seals shot dead three of the four individuals holding the ship’s captain on a lifeboat April 12. The other person, Abduhl Wal-i-Musi, was taken into U.S. custody and is being brought to New York to face trial.

Three U.S. warships, including the destroyer *Bainbridge*, were in the area around the lifeboat.

U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates described the pirates as “untrained teenagers” aged 17 to 19.

Last December, the U.S. government secured a resolution from the United Nations Security Council granting “all necessary means” for military operations on Somali territory, in its airspace, and territorial waters supposedly to go after pirates.

Warships from some 16 countries, including the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, China, Russia, India, Iran, and South Korea, are deployed off the coast of Somalia, including hundreds of miles into the Gulf of Aden in so-called counter-piracy patrols. Some of the operations are organized as part of a U.S.-led coalition, some others by the European Union in its first naval operation.

French forces attacked what they claimed was a pirate “mother ship” in the Indian Ocean April 15, detaining 11 people they accuse of being pirates. According to a statement by the European Union’s Maritime Security Center, the “mother ship” was actually a 30-foot boat floating 460 miles off the Somali coast.

In the early 1990s Somali fisherman armed themselves to confront foreign capitalist fishing fleets illegally entering Somalia’s waters. Somali capitalists have transformed their effort into a lucrative piracy business.

There were 122 pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia last year, two in January and February of this year, and 15 in March, according to the International Maritime Bureau. Agence France-Presse reports that pirates now hold at least 17 ships and more than 250 hostages for ransom. “Pirates have generally treated hostages well,” reported Reuters, “sometimes roasting goat meat for them and even passing phones around so they can call loved ones.”

Washington’s attempts over the past two decades to “stabilize” the region included a 1993–94 failed invasion of Somalia. In December 2006 Ethiopian troops with U.S. military support invaded the country to oust the Somali Islamic Courts Council and replace it with an imperialist-backed transitional regime.

Somalia’s current prime minister, Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, has offered to provide information to assist Washington in going after pirate leaders. He told AP April 16 that pirates have become so wealthy and powerful that they threaten his government. He is calling for the United States and the European Union to build up military forces and establish outposts along Somalia’s coastline.

### Correction

A line was dropped from the final paragraph of the editorial in last week’s issue. The paragraph should have read: “To put an end to imperialist wars once and for all, working people in the United States need to take political power out of the hands of the war makers and begin to organize society to meet human needs, not maximize private profits.”

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on line

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